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## State spokesman offers update on Millville school construction

By JOYCE VANAMAN Staff Writer, (856) 825-2303

MILLVILLE - The state is spending \$43.7 million to build 21st century schools in Millville for 21st century leaders.

And for some of the projects, the push for these facilities began in the 20th century.

George Strachan, director of communications for the N.J. Schools Construction Corp., or SCC, presented a comprehensive update Monday at a special meeting prior to the regular Millville school board meeting.

Strachan particularly focused on three major projects - the Early Childhood Center, Lakeside Middle School and Millville Senior High School additions and renovations.

The state also is spending \$14 million on health and safety work for eight schools, a couple of which have been completed, while most others are nearing completion, according to Strachan.

### Childhood Center

The new child family center, as it is referred to locally, is to be finished early in 2005 at a cost of approximately \$14 million.

Principal JoAnn Burns and her staff are hoping that "early in 2005" will be very early January - right after the Christmas holiday - and representatives of the Schools Construction Corp. indicated that might be possible.

This project consists of a complete renovation and addition to the former Prudential/AARP building across from Wheaton Village. It will have 41 classrooms, administrative spaces, specialized instructional spaces such as gross motor skills development area, a kitchen, child study offices, social workers office and a parents center.

Burns said that it will be able to accommodate 615 youngsters enrolled in the program for 3- and 4-year-olds.

### Lakeside

Strachan said that this project, which will cost approximately \$13.7 million, is expected to be completed by early 2005. It will include a new main gymnasium, auditorium, lockers, bleachers, auxiliary gym, choral and instrumental music rooms.

It was previously announced that the eighth grades will be moved there in the fall of 2005.

### High school

This comprehensive expansion and renovation of the existing school is expected to cost \$16 million and to be completed in the spring of 2006. Included in this project will be 13 general classrooms, an auxiliary gymnasium, six new science labs, a state-of-the-art media center, 10 small group classrooms and a cafeteria/kitchen expansion.

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A new telephone, clock and communications system is part of the project, as well as a complete technology upgrade.

The existing temporary structure will be removed to allow for re-use of the parking areas it occupies.

The existing school contains approximately 170,000 square feet. The new additions will add about 61,000 square feet, and 20,000 square feet in the existing building will be renovated. Design drawings for this project are nearing completion and are in the first stages of review by the Department of Community Affairs. Bids for construction are expected to be submitted this summer, with construction beginning in early fall of this year.

"The SCC is committed to advancing Gov. (James E.) McGreevey's vision of state-of-the-art 21st century schools that offer healthy, safe and productive learning environments that lower energy costs for school districts as well," Strachan said.

Partnering with the New Jersey Institute of Technology, the SCC has established design criteria to build schools that are healthy and productive; cost-efficient; educationally effective; environmentally sustainable and community centered, according to Strachan.

While the major focus is on the children, the construction program is also creating living wage jobs and direct property tax relief, Strachan pointed out.

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